



Embassy of the United States of America

American Citizen Services
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INTERNET FINANCIAL SCAMS

We are contacted every day by people who have been defrauded online for hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars by people they thought were friends or even loved ones. Internet financial scams are attempts by con artists to convince you to send them money. These fraudulent schemes can include lotteries, on-line dating, inheritance, work permits, bank overpayments, or make it appear that you are helping a friend in trouble. [Click here for information on common scams.](#)

All of these deceptions have one thing in common – they contain requests for money. Sometimes you are asked to pay money to obtain something of value for yourself (e.g. a prize, a romantic relationship, more money); or you are asked to pay money to help a friend in trouble. In every case, however, the ultimate indicator of a scam is that you are always asked to give money.

Con artists can be very creative and very determined. Be skeptical. Do not send anyone money unless you are certain that it is a legitimate request – even if you think you know the person well based on your online correspondence. You are unlikely to be able to recover money lost in such scams. For more information, please see the Department of State's brochure on international financial scams at http://travel.state.gov/pdf/international_financial_scams_brochure.pdf).

If you believe you are the victim of an Internet scam:

- End all communication with the scammer immediately. If you feel threatened in any way, contact your local police at once.
- In the United States, report the crime to the Internet Crime Complaint Center, a partnership among the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C), and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BIA), at www.ic3.gov.
- In the United Kingdom, report the crime to the Metropolitan Police at www.met.police.uk. You also may be eligible for compensation from the United Kingdom's [Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority](#).
- If you have sent the scammers money via Western Union, you also can report the fraud via [Western Union's website](#).